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Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions

Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 71/173. It updates information contained in the report of the Secretary-General submitted to the Assembly at its seventy-first session (A/71/354) and covers the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017. The report has been coordinated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and includes information provided by the International Organization for Migration, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, the United Nations Population Fund, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization. It also includes information drawn from reports by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre.

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I. Introduction

1. Africa[1] was affected by multiple crises over the past year, which saw the number of people displaced by conflict and persecution grow steadily. Instability and insecurity in Burundi, the Central African Republic and South Sudan and parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria and Somalia triggered significant population movements within and across borders. Numerous situations remained unresolved across the continent, with millions of refugees and internally displaced persons lingering in protracted situations.

2. By the end of 2016, the number of refugees and internally displaced persons in Africa had risen from 4.4 million to more than 5 million, and from 10.7 million to more than 11 million, respectively. In addition, the region hosted 450,000 asylum seekers and an estimated 1 million stateless persons. The majority of refugees received protection in neighbouring countries, many of which faced increasing economic hardship. Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, the Sudan and Uganda were the African countries hosting the largest number of refugees, with the refugee population in Uganda nearly doubling during the period.

3. Food insecurity and the risk of famine, particularly in East Africa and the Horn of Africa, called for major relief efforts. In parts of northern Nigeria, Somalia and South Sudan, some 20 million people were affected by a combination of prolonged conflict and drought that fuelled food insecurity. As a result of funding shortfalls, nine refugee operations in Africa[2] experienced cuts to food rations, with negative consequences for approximately 2 million refugees.

4. Mixed movements of refugees and migrants remained a challenge in many regions of Africa, including across the Sahara towards North Africa, from the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa towards Southern Africa, and across the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden to Yemen, and presented serious protection risks and difficulties for receiving countries.

5. Against this complex background, Africa is expected to benefit from a number of new initiatives to galvanize national, regional and international responses from Member States, regional organizations, international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and development actors. This includes the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit (such as the Grand Bargain) in May 2016; the high-level summit of the General Assembly to address large movements of refugees and migrants in September 2016, which led to the adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants; and the leaders' summit on refugees that followed; as well as a number of important regional endeavours. Those initiatives are expected to lead to a more predictable and comprehensive approach, as well as additional resourcing, to address the humanitarian needs and foster solutions to displacement.

II. Subregional overviews

A. East Africa, including the Horn of Africa

6. Compounding the effects of recent and protracted conflicts, drought in East Africa, including the Horn of Africa, led to severe food insecurity, including in parts of Ethiopia and Kenya, with Somalia and South Sudan threatened by famine —

[1] In the present report, "Africa" refers to sub-Saharan Africa only.

[2] Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania.

which further contributed to displacement. The subregion hosted some 3.2 million refugees, mainly from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and South Sudan, and nearly 5.6 million internally displaced persons in Somalia, South Sudan and the Sudan. The war in Yemen continued to affect the subregion, with more than 95,000 refugees, third-country nationals and others fleeing to Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia and the Sudan since the crisis began in 2015.

7. Somalia remained one of the most protracted displacement situations globally, with nearly 1 million refugees in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Yemen, in addition to some 1.5 million internally displaced persons. In 2016, the population of the Dadaab camp in Kenya decreased by 60,000, through the relocation of non-Somalis, the resettlement of vulnerable refugees and the voluntary repatriation of nearly 34,000 Somalis. Nevertheless, instability, insecurity, limited social services and facilities and food shortages in Somalia hampered further returns.

8. The crisis in South Sudan intensified in July 2016 and has become the world's fastest-growing refugee emergency. Armed conflict, killings, abductions, rapes and a general state of lawlessness, compounded by food shortages, led to large movements across borders. Many of those fleeing suffered from alarming levels of malnutrition. By the end of 2016, one of four South Sudanese had been forced from their homes — 1.9 million as internally displaced persons and 1.4 million as refugees. Uganda hosted the largest number of South Sudanese refugees, with nearly 640,000, followed by Ethiopia (340,000), the Sudan (298,000), Kenya (88,000), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (67,000) and the Central African Republic (4,900).

9. In South Sudan, humanitarian assistance and protection were provided to 5.1 million people in 2016 and 3.4 million people in 2017, where access was possible, with a focus on the most vulnerable. By February, 100,000 people were facing starvation, and the World Food Programme (WFP) considered that more than 1 million were on the brink of famine. Severe underfunding made the provision of adequate food rations, clean water and health services challenging. Children were particularly affected, with many seriously malnourished. More than 1 million children fled the country, and 1 million more were internally displaced. Over 75,000 children who crossed the border of South Sudan were either unaccompanied or separated from their families. Some 6 million people, or 50 per cent of the population, were estimated to be severely food-insecure in June 2017, compared with 5.5 million the previous month.

10. The number of refugees from the Sudan had increased slightly to 650,000 by the end of 2016, hosted mainly by Chad and South Sudan, and there were some 2.3 million internally displaced persons in need of humanitarian assistance. The number of Eritrean refugees increased from 407,500 in 2015 to some 460,000 in 2016, hosted mainly by Ethiopia and the Sudan.

B. Central Africa and the Great Lakes

11. Since the outbreak of civil unrest in Burundi in 2015, some 417,000 Burundians fled the country, including 120,000 during 2016. Some 241,000 fled to the United Republic of Tanzania, 85,000 to Rwanda, 38,000 to Uganda and 40,000 to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. There were challenges in identifying additional land to relieve the overcrowded camps, particularly in Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

12. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the volatile security situation was exacerbated by political developments. New outbreaks of violence, indiscriminate killings and human rights violations triggered further displacement, including across

borders. Whereas some 2.2 million people were already internally displaced, a further 1.3 million fled strife in the Kasai region during the second half of 2016, bringing the total number of displaced persons to 3.7 million. Some 31,000 people fled to Angola, bringing the total number of refugees in the region originating from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to nearly 570,000. As at 30 June, the Democratic Republic of the Congo continued to host more than 473,000 refugees, mainly from Rwanda (245,000), the Central African Republic (102,000) and South Sudan (80,775).

13. In the Central African Republic, the resumption of fighting between armed groups in Bambari, Bria and Kaga Bandoro resulted in internal population movements and new arrivals in neighbouring countries. By July there were some 481,000 Central African refugees in Cameroon, Chad, the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Nearly 560,000 people were internally displaced, representing a 40 per cent increase over the past year, with more than 180,000 new displacements between May and July. In spite of the volatile situation, thousands of internally displaced persons were helped to return voluntarily to the capital, while some 34,000 Central African refugees spontaneously returned to their areas of origin.

C. West Africa

14. Attacks against civilians in north-eastern Nigeria and across borders caused further displacement in Chad, the Niger and Nigeria, while the security environment in northern and central Mali deteriorated. Altogether, the subregion hosted some 300,000 refugees and 2.7 million internally displaced persons. Displacement as a result of intercommunal clashes, including between pastoral and sedentary farmers and/or over land issues, continued and affected primarily Nigeria, Mali, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo.

15. In north-eastern Nigeria, human rights violations, coupled with near-famine conditions, placed the number of internally displaced persons at some 1.8 million. More than 200,000 Nigerians found refuge in Cameroon, Chad and the Niger, with the vast majority living in poor host communities. The United Nations and its partners carried out registration, provided refugees with documentation and advocated continued access to asylum to prevent refoulement. Assistance to internally displaced persons was strengthened, although the provision of adequate shelter, food and basic aid items remained challenging in some parts. Between April and June, some 13,000 Nigerian refugees returned spontaneously from Cameroon, most of whom lived in displacement in the Banki region of northern Nigeria, while reports of forced returns persisted. Access to areas of return was limited.

16. In Mali, the security situation in the north and central part of the country was volatile, with clashes between armed groups, intercommunal violence and terrorist attacks reported, including along the borders with Burkina Faso and the Niger. Almost 52,000 Malians remained internally displaced, as progress in the implementation of the peace agreement signed in June 2015 was slow. Small numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons returned spontaneously and received assistance, while new displacement was also reported. The United Nations continued to provide protection and assistance to approximately 140,000 Malian refugees in Burkina Faso, Mauritania and the Niger, where self-reliance and livelihood programmes were enhanced.

17. Other refugee host countries in the region included Benin (with 600 Central African and 160 Ivorian refugees), the Gambia (with nearly 8,000 refugees, mainly from Senegal), Ghana (13,000 refugees, mainly from Côte d'Ivoire and Togo),

Guinea-Bissau (9,300 refugees, mainly from Senegal), Senegal (14,600 refugees, mainly from Mauritania) and Togo (12,500 refugees and 780 asylum seekers, mainly from Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana).

D. Southern Africa

18. The Southern Africa region hosted some 289,000 asylum seekers, 162,000 refugees, mainly from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Somalia, 15,000 internally displaced persons and 5,700 returnees. Mixed movements remained a challenge, particularly in South Africa, where a large number of asylum claims had to be processed to identify those in need of international protection, amid concerns over national security and xenophobia. Anti-foreigner sentiment remained a problem in South Africa, with sporadic attacks reported.

19. Violence in western Mozambique resulted in the displacement of thousands of people who fled to Malawi and Zimbabwe in 2016. Hostilities ceased towards the end of the year, and nearly 5,800 people have returned.

20. The United Nations enhanced its presence in Angola to support the Government in responding to the arrival of some 32,000 people who were fleeing the Kasai region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The majority were women, children and the elderly, who arrived in the Lunda Norte province in a poor state of nutrition. Humanitarian agencies, in coordination with the local authorities, provided life-saving assistance and other basic services.

III. Protection of refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless persons

A. Protection landscape

21. While millions of refugees and asylum seekers were granted protection throughout Africa and internally displaced persons were protected in their own countries, core protection challenges were observed, with instances of refoulement, restraints on freedom of movement and physical and administrative obstacles precluding displaced people from gaining access to asylum procedures, legal protection and assistance. Human trafficking and smuggling, sexual and gender-based violence and forced recruitment prevailed in many places, while maintaining the civilian character of asylum was a problem in some countries.

22. Many countries in Africa remained steadfast in their commitment to the protection of refugees and internally displaced persons. The United Nations worked with the relevant Governments to strengthen national asylum systems and helped to ensure accessible, fair and efficient refugee status determination procedures at first instance and on appeal. Support was provided through capacity-building initiatives, technical assistance and engagement in dialogues on national policies.

B. Registration and documentation

23. Registration and documentation remained vital to protection by helping to prevent refoulement and enabling access to services. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) biometric identity management system was rolled out in various countries across the continent, which allowed for

the capturing, storing and retrieving of biometric information tied to a unique biographical identity, to protect and preserve identities over time.

24. The International Organization for Migration continued biometric registration in South Sudan and initiated biometric registration in areas outside protection of civilians sites that register displaced and vulnerable communities. Many individuals were previously registered in the site and had their cards reregistered, which enabled families to receive much needed humanitarian assistance in their current location.

C. Mixed movement

25. The majority of people travelling in mixed movements in Africa remained on the continent, while only a minority moved on elsewhere. The southern part of Africa was disproportionally affected, with many individuals travelling in groups, towards South Africa. Many refugees and migrants, including unaccompanied minors, were intercepted while entering or exiting transit countries and were arrested by immigration officials.

26. The limited capacity of border officials to effectively identify people with international protection needs moving across borders and a lack of appropriate referral mechanisms hindered access to protection and solutions. The reasons cited as to why people with legitimate protection concerns undertake these dangerous journeys include the lack of effective protection in countries of first asylum and transit, insecurity and poor reception conditions, lengthy refugee status determination procedures, a lack of livelihood and educational opportunities and limited access to resettlement and family reunification.

27. A proliferation of criminal networks involved in trafficking continued to be reported along migratory routes in Africa, with women and children being particularly vulnerable. Resorting to smugglers has become an increasingly common phenomenon; it exposes both refugees and migrants to serious danger and heightened protection risks. The movement of refugees and migrants across the Sahara towards North Africa and to the central Mediterranean Sea towards Europe continued to take a devastating toll on human life. In 2016, more than 40,000 people, or 23 per cent of those arriving in Italy by sea, were reported to be from East Africa and the Horn of Africa, and around 110,000, or some 60 per cent, were from West Africa.

D. Internal displacement

28. Ongoing conflict and violations of international humanitarian law, at times coupled with slow-onset hazards and sudden disasters, have led to significant internal displacement. Four of the countries with the largest internally displaced populations were in Africa: the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, South Sudan and the Sudan. Of over 11 million internally displaced persons, the majority were in East Africa and the Horn of Africa (5.7 million), followed by Central Africa and the Great Lakes region (3 million) and West Africa (2.3 million). More than 1.3 million people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and 865,000 in South Sudan were newly displaced in 2016.

29. The African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) has now been signed by 40 of the 54 States members of the African Union and ratified by 27. The first session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention was held in Zimbabwe in April,

with the participation of international organizations. Recognizing that the transposition of the Kampala Convention into national law remained to be achieved, the participants adopted an action plan for implementation. The United Nations and its partners engaged in a number of initiatives aimed at promoting the ratification and implementation of the Convention and provided relevant training.

E. Prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence

30. Sexual and gender-based violence continued to be used as a weapon of war and a tactic to displace civilians from strategic areas in numerous countries. Refugee and internally displaced women who were exposed to such violence, including during flight had little access to medical care, legal protection and psychosocial support, and many health facilities were not equipped to respond.

31. The United Nations humanitarian agencies prioritized protection and response to sexual and gender-based violence through community engagement, increased access to health services and the provision of legal aid. In Cameroon, 13 community-based committees for early identification of cases of sexual and gender-based violence and referral to government-run services were established in urban neighbourhoods with large concentrations of refugees. In Nigeria, the United Nations worked with the Nigerian Bar Association to train 50 officials from the judicial system on prevention and response strategies. In the United Republic of Tanzania, medical staff present at border entry points allowed for the timely identification of victims and accelerated referrals to health services and psychosocial counselling. In South Sudan, post-rape kits were provided, and some 100 health providers were trained in the clinical management of rape. In the Sudan, some 50 refugee volunteers, along with social workers deployed by the Ministry of Social Welfare, were trained to provide assistance to victims of sexual and gender-based violence.

F. Child protection

32. Conflict and violence posed significant risks for children, including physical and psychological harm, forced recruitment, sexual and gender-based violence and trafficking. Displaced children were also vulnerable to intrafamily violence and other protection risks owing to cramped living conditions, disrupted social networks and emotional distress. Children who were not able to attend school were particularly affected. Other critical child protection challenges included female genital mutilation and early and forced marriage.

33. All efforts were made to ensure that the needs of children were central to any protection response. The United Nations worked closely with national child protection authorities to ensure that vulnerable children, including those separated from their families, received appropriate care. Regional refugee response plans on education and child protection were developed to help provide a regional perspective to responding to the emergency in these two areas for the South Sudanese refugees. In Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, case management systems were enhanced to allow for the systematic referral of vulnerable children to specialized services. Family tracing and reunification remained a priority throughout the region. In Ethiopia, the number of unaccompanied and separated children that arrived in 2016 (4,200) was the highest on record, while the country hosted a total of 43,527 unaccompanied and separated children. In the United Republic of Tanzania, UNICEF supported 6,453 unaccompanied and separated Burundian children with acute protection concerns.

G. Statelessness

34. Important advances to address statelessness occurred in close cooperation with regional organizations. In May, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) adopted the Banjul Plan of Action on the Eradication of Statelessness 2017-2024, in which it outlined measures to implement the commitments made under the Abidjan Declaration on the Eradication of Statelessness, adopted in 2015. National action plans have been developed by most West African States. The Southern African Development Community adopted a resolution on the prevention of statelessness and the protection of stateless persons in the region. The 12 States members of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region adopted a draft declaration on the eradication of statelessness, with a view to its formal endorsement later in 2017.

35. Guinea-Bissau acceded to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, bringing the total number of States parties to the conventions to 89 and 68, respectively.

36. Recognizing the right to a nationality as a human right, the Executive Council of the African Union approved the draft protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the right to a nationality. The draft is expected to be submitted to the member States for approval in 2018. Meanwhile, several States have sought to implement domestic law reforms to ensure adherence to international standards on equal rights to nationality. Madagascar and Sierra Leone amended their nationality laws to allow women to pass on their nationality to their children on an equal basis with men.

37. The Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics, a regional programme developed by ministries responsible for civil registration, continued to strengthen civil registration and statistics systems, with support from the United Nations.

38. Efforts were made to reduce the number of stateless persons through confirming or allowing the acquisition of nationality. In Côte d'Ivoire, approximately 6,000 stateless persons acquired nationality between 2014 and 2016 through a special procedure. In Kenya, the President instructed that the Makonde ethnic group be issued citizenship documents. Some 1,500 Makonde have received citizenship.

IV. Humanitarian response and operational challenges

A. Capacity and constraints

39. Humanitarian access, particularly in the Central African Republic, northern Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and the Sudan, remained challenging. Security considerations, as well as administrative hurdles, limited the capacity of humanitarian actors to reach populations in need, particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In Burundi, humanitarian partners encountered administrative obstacles at the local level, particularly in remote areas where population displacement and humanitarian needs were on the rise. In northern Cameroon, landmines, unexploded ordnance and improvised explosive devices, along with ongoing insecurity, restricted access to displaced and host communities. The presence of armed groups also prevented access in parts of Chad, Mali and the Niger.

40. To bolster the effectiveness of humanitarian responses, cash-based interventions were increasingly used in many operations across Africa, including in Somalia and the Sudan, in line with commitments made under the Grand Bargain. Multipurpose cash grants provided refugees with greater independence in meeting their needs in such areas as food, access to services and education. They also served as an important protection tool and were used to facilitate returns. United Nations organizations are involved in developing a common cash facility to ensure efficiency.

B. Food and nutrition

41. The nutritional status of refugees and internally displaced persons was further aggravated by food crises in several countries. Displaced persons and refugees are particularly vulnerable, often owing to barriers to accessing labour markets. In turn, they often rely on host families and communities, thereby straining already scarce resources. Competition for limited resources can lead to tensions and potentially trigger conflict. In 2016, WFP provided food to approximately 7.5 million refugees and internally displaced persons in Africa. However, owing to growing needs and funding shortfalls, there were considerable reductions in food rations. The number of refugees affected by ration cuts increased from 787,000 in 2014 to more than 2 million in 2016. Cuts to food assistance ranged from 14 per cent in Ethiopia to 75 per cent for some refugees in Uganda. In Kenya, rations were reduced by half for 434,000 refugees in Dadaab and Kakuma.

42. The prevalence of undernutrition in refugee children under 5 years of age remained a concern. In 2016, some 119,000 refugee children under 5 years of age were treated for acute malnutrition. Of the 97 refugee sites surveyed in 11 refugee-hosting countries, the levels of acute malnutrition were considered acceptable in only 53 sites. Stunting, which is an indicator of chronic malnutrition, was high in 75 sites. Levels of anaemia among refugee children under 5 years of age fell within acceptable standards in only one site. Efforts by UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP in support of national Governments attempted to improve nutrition in refugee contexts. For example, UNICEF scaled up its nutrition programme for severely malnourished refugee children in South Kordofan and East Darfur and the Sudan and initiated nutrition screening for infants and counselling for mothers and caregivers.

C. Health

43. The health status of refugees and internally displaced persons deteriorated in some countries, marked by severe malnutrition and outbreaks of measles, cholera, malaria and meningitis, which caused additional strain on national health systems. Overcrowding in rudimentary shelters or camps, inadequate water and sanitation and low vaccination levels caused an increase in infectious diseases. The United Nations and its partners ensured that basic health services were provided through mobile clinics and effective coordination with local and national authorities, including on preparedness and response. Measures were put in place to improve water quality and sanitation facilities in camps.

44. Public health interventions and programmes were scaled up to address the urgent needs of South Sudanese refugees. Emergency public health interventions coordinated among the United Nations, NGOs and ministries of health achieved effective responses to cholera outbreaks in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, which curbed transmission and mortality. In Ethiopia and Uganda, UNICEF supported measles vaccinations for South Sudanese refugees and

the host population, benefiting 94,000 children. In Uganda, 65,000 refugee children were immunized against polio. A meningitis vaccination campaign was carried out for South Sudanese refugees and surrounding communities in Ethiopia. In the Central African Republic, measles vaccination campaigns reached over 33,000 displaced children. In north-eastern Nigeria, technical support was provided to strengthen the health sector, including through the deployment of hundreds of community workers and more than 30 mobile clinics. Steps were also taken to address, through HIV/AIDS interventions, the increased vulnerability of displaced populations to HIV.

45. In May, the World Health Assembly endorsed its resolution 70.15 on promoting the health of refugees and migrants, in which it urged the 194 member States of WHO to strengthen international cooperation and necessary health-related assistance for refugees and migrants. WHO supported African countries in their efforts to provide essential health services for refugees and internally displaced persons as part of their national health programmes, including reproductive health and vaccination services, and to build the local capacity. Reproductive health services were an integral part of the public health response in humanitarian settings, with a focus on improving obstetric and neonatal care, as well as responses to sexual and gender-based violence. In 2016, 86 per cent of the refugee operations surveyed had achieved the standard of at least 90 per cent of deliveries occurring in health facilities assisted by a skilled health worker, an increase from 68 per cent in previous years. In Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and the Sudan, "dignity kits" were distributed to vulnerable women and girls, women-friendly spaces were created and reproductive health centres were established. Developed by UNFPA, the dignity kits comprise culturally adapted, basic hygiene necessities for displaced women and girls.

D. Education

46. Access to quality education for displaced children remained a challenge, despite progress on some fronts. In East Africa and the Horn of Africa, 11 countries held national consultation forums on the inclusion of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (on education) in national education plans. In Rwanda and South Sudan, the inclusion of refugees was stipulated in the plans of the education sector. In the United Republic of Tanzania, a regional forum on Goal 4 for East Africa was held in February, which resulted in a ministerial statement that stipulated the inclusion of refugees in national plans, budgets and monitoring systems.

47. Following the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the United Nations and the Global Partnership for Education to strengthen collaboration on the inclusion of refugees in national multi-year education plans, nine focus countries across Africa were selected for implementation. In Rwanda, the United Nations worked closely with the Government for the effective transition of Burundi refugees to the national education system.

48. The United Nations and its partners were effective in securing funding under the Education Cannot Wait initiative to improve education for refugee children and host communities in Chad and Ethiopia. In Ethiopia, the goal is to reach more than 68,000 children and increase school enrolment by 50 per cent. Ethiopia also hosted the largest tertiary refugee scholarship programme, with more than 500 refugee students benefiting from university scholarships under the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative.

E. Livelihoods

49. In 2016, UNHCR and WFP launched a joint strategy for enhancing self-reliance in food security and nutrition in protracted refugee situations. The strategy aims to help refugees meet their own needs and also benefits host communities, thereby fostering social cohesion. In Uganda, the Government generously provided refugees in protracted situations with land for cultivation and enabled refugee farmers to participate in the economy outside the refugee settlements, and opportunities have been identified to better link refugees and potential employers. The United Nations promoted sustainable food value chains and outgrower schemes that link smallholder farmers with larger markets. In the Sudan, the United Nations implemented an agriculture and livestock value chain with a focus on milk and meat production for nearly 82,000 beneficiaries. The development of agriculture value chains has also been initiated in Botswana, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

50. In some countries, small inputs have led to significant outcomes that benefited a wider population. In the Sila region of Chad, displaced women's associations were provided with water wells for their gardens, which contributed to food security and provided economic opportunities for displaced and host communities. In Burkina Faso, Kenya, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania, refugee artisans were connected to international markets. Pilot programmes for end-to-end business development helped to enhance self-sufficiency. For example, a cooperative poultry farm run by refugees in Tongogara camp in Zimbabwe included a modern butchery and storefront that markets produce for refugees, host communities and local businesses. In Rwanda, a joint initiative of the United Nations and the Government supported self-reliance and employment for Congolese and Burundian refugees through entrepreneurial initiatives. Efforts were also made to establish linkages with financial service providers to increase refugees' access to financing. A revolving loan scheme was created that facilitated interest-free loans for 425 refugee entrepreneurs in Kakuma settlement in Kenya, which enabled them to expand their businesses.

F. Security of refugees, internally displaced persons and humanitarian personnel

51. Ongoing violence continued to threaten the safety and security of displaced populations and humanitarian staff and obstructed the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance. The top 10 countries where incidents were recorded included 8 countries in Africa. Between June 2016 and May 2017, a total of 69 humanitarian workers were killed, 73 were wounded and 60 were kidnapped in security incidents in Africa. In South Sudan, in 2017 alone, 14 aid workers were killed. In southern and central Somalia, threats against aid workers persisted, while attacks occurred frequently throughout the year, which left some areas entirely inaccessible. The Democratic Republic of the Congo was one of the countries with the most security incidents involving the United Nations, including the abduction and killing of two experts in the Kasai region.

52. Other countries with high numbers of incidents that had a particular impact on the security of civilian populations included the Central African Republic, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia and South Sudan. Aid delivery remained difficult in Cameroon, Chad, the Niger and Nigeria, as armed elements launched sporadic and targeted attacks against the civilian population.

V. Ending forced displacement

A. Solutions for refugees

Voluntary return

53. Ongoing conflict, human rights violations and the absence of the rule of law in a number of countries hindered voluntary repatriation. Nevertheless, refugees sometimes make the difficult decision to return home even when the situation that led to their displacement has not been fully resolved. Such a decision may be influenced by many factors, including long periods in exile and challenging conditions in the country of asylum. The United Nations worked to encourage a safe return environment, supporting State and civil society institutions that are responsible for ensuring the rights of returnees, including in addressing legal, administrative and other barriers.

54. Despite the fragile security and socioeconomic environment in Somalia, nearly 34,000 Somali refugees returned from Kenya to Somalia in 2016. Ongoing fragility and a looming drought affected the reabsorption capacity of Somalia. Working closely with the authorities, UNHCR and partners counselled and assisted returning refugees and monitored returns as far as possible, while advocating efforts to improve the conditions for sustainable return.

55. More than 37,200 refugees spontaneously returned to the Sudan in 2016, nearly all from Chad. In addition, 34,400 refugees returned to the Central African Republic, mainly from Cameroon, Chad and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Voluntary returns to Côte d'Ivoire resumed from all countries in the region, with 19,600 returns in 2016. An additional 13,000 refugees are expected to return voluntarily during 2017. Other countries with relatively large numbers of returns included the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with more than 13,200, and Mali, with nearly 10,000.

Local integration

56. In the context of the regional legal framework, including the ECOWAS Protocol relating to free movement of persons, residence and establishment, solutions were explored with States to facilitate the local integration of refugees through assisted processes for naturalization or alternative legal residence status. In the Niger, five households of Cameroonian, Ivorian and Rwandan refugees were naturalized by presidential decree. While the numbers were small, this first step forward should be recognized.

Resettlement

57. Resettlement remained a crucial protection tool to meet the needs of the most vulnerable refugees in Africa. During the past decade, some 279,400 refugees from Africa were submitted for resettlement to a third country. Until 2012, the annual submission rates of resettlement referrals to States remained consistently below 29,000. However, between 2012 and 2016, resettlement submissions out of Africa increased by 180 per cent and resettlement departures rose from 11,300 to 38,900.

58. In 2016, refugees were resettled out of 35 African asylum countries from more than 29 countries of origin, with over half of them from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, followed by Eritrea, Somalia and the Sudan. As part of the comprehensive strategy to promote durable solutions for Congolese refugees, UNHCR is continuing the enhanced resettlement initiative for Congolese refugees in the region, with the submission of over 80,000 cases since 2012.

Comprehensive solutions strategies

59. Building on its Global Initiative on Somali Refugees, which is aimed at finding solutions for Somali refugees in East Africa and the Horn of Africa and in Yemen, UNHCR appointed a Special Envoy for the Somali refugee situation, in September 2016. The Special Envoy was tasked with mobilizing humanitarian, diplomatic and fundraising efforts, at the national and regional levels, to help bring about solutions for Somali refugees and asylum seekers.

60. Progress was made in the implementation of the comprehensive strategy for the Rwandan refugee situation, which recommended the cessation of refugee status for Rwandans who fled between 1959 and 1998. At a ministerial meeting held in Geneva in September 2016, participants affirmed the deadline of 31 December 2017. Intensified efforts are ongoing to bring about durable solutions for the approximately 260,000 Rwandans who fall under the cessation clause and who are mainly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

B. Solutions for internally displaced persons

61. At the World Humanitarian Summit held in 2016, Member States, United Nations organizations and other stakeholders were called upon to increase protection and assistance to internally displaced persons and to support effective policies that reduce new and protracted situations of internal displacement, with the aim of decreasing the number of internally displaced persons by at least 50 per cent globally by 2030. Collaborative approaches between humanitarian and development actors that transition displaced persons from dependency on aid towards increased resilience and self-reliance were identified as critical to achieving this goal.

62. The Somalia Internally Displaced Persons Solutions Initiative, launched in December 2015, has been integrated into the national development plan and was expanded over the past year within a broader approach that encompasses the needs of returnees and receiving communities. This unique initiative recognizes the importance of achieving solutions for internally displaced persons as a national and local priority. In the Central African Republic, displaced persons were included together with returning refugees in an assessment conducted by the Ministry of Justice on the priorities of the population in the justice and security sectors, with a view to supporting sustainable solutions.

VI. New approaches

A. New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and related initiatives

63. To date, the comprehensive refugee response framework, the core elements of which were set out by the General Assembly in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants,[3] is being applied in five countries in Africa. Furthermore,

[3] The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, adopted at the high-level meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants, contains a set of commitments to enhance protection and solutions for refugees and migrants, in the spirit of international solidarity and burden- and responsibility-sharing. The New York Declaration called for the application of a comprehensive refugee response framework, developed by UNHCR in close coordination with States and through a multi-stakeholder approach. The Declaration foresees the adoption of two new global compacts in 2018: a global compact on refugees and a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.

Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania are developing a regional cooperation framework for the Somali refugee situation, supported by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. Across those locations, efforts are under way to bring about comprehensive and predicable responses, including in protracted situations, bringing humanitarian and development actors together in a coordinated, "whole-of-society" approach that benefits the forcibly displaced and host communities.

64. In March, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development convened a summit of Heads of State and Government at which the Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees and the Reintegration of Returnees in Somalia was adopted. The Declaration contains commitments aimed at accelerating progress in creating conditions conducive to voluntary and sustainable return; maintaining protection and asylum space while enhancing self-reliance and inclusion; strengthening subregional cooperation; and easing the pressure on host countries. The Nairobi Declaration constitutes the regional application of the comprehensive refugee response framework for the Somali refugee situation. To guide its implementation, a road map with a detailed results framework has been elaborated that highlights the key indicators and related milestones to be realized over the coming year.

65. Uganda was the first country to announce the application of the comprehensive refugee response framework. In June, the Government of Uganda and the Secretary-General convened the Solidarity Summit on Refugees to "assist the Government to ease the burden of delivering integrated services to both refugees and host communities",[4] aimed at supporting the Government's progressive approach to refugee protection by mobilizing resources to meet the humanitarian and long-term needs of a growing number of refugees and the host communities.

66. At the leaders' summit on refugees, nine States in Africa were among those that made commitments to strengthen refugee protection and solutions. Commitments were made in the areas of education, including access to tertiary education, job opportunities, registration and civil documentation, the provision of land to support crop production, expanded health and social services, the adoption of laws and policies in favour of refugees, self-reliance and inclusion measures, the promotion of integration and the facilitation of legal status for eligible refugees. For example, the Government of Djibouti promulgated a progressive law that will transform the situation of refugees from one of encampment to one of social and economic inclusion.

B. Humanitarian-development nexus

67. With the number of people living in protracted displacement continuing to rise, there has been a growing realization that humanitarian support alone is insufficient to lift displaced people out of poverty and to find solutions to their plight. Achieving sustainable solutions to displacement situations requires stronger cooperation with development partners from the outset of a displacement situation and the inclusion of refugees and internally displaced persons within national development programmes. Collaboration has been strengthened with development actors, such as the African Development Bank and the World Bank, to promote development in refugee-hosting areas.

68. UNHCR and the World Bank continued to cooperate on analytical studies that examine the impact and consequences of conflict and displacement in different

[4] Kampala Declaration on Refugees, 23 June 2017, sect. III, para. 4.b.ii.

regions of Africa. Studies carried out since 2014 have included regional and situational assessments of key socioeconomic factors and analyses of the refugee and displacement situations in the Lake Chad Basin in West Africa, Central Africa, Kenya and Uganda. Those assessments helped to outline the possibilities for complementary engagement in those contexts. In September 2016, the World Bank published a flagship report[5] in which it examined a number of situations in Africa and elsewhere and articulated strategies to reduce the vulnerabilities of the displaced and help them to rebuild their lives through development financing.

69. There was increased recognition that recurrent and protracted displacement crises represent the biggest challenge to realizing the Sustainable Development Goals and ensuring that the poorest and most marginalized populations are not left behind, especially in fragile States. In December 2016, the Board of Governors of the World Bank approved a $75 billion allocation to the International Development Association for 2017-2019, including $14 billion for fragile and conflict- and violence-affected States and a special $2 billion subwindow for refugee-affected host countries. Several strategy planning missions were undertaken to the host countries likely to receive financing: Cameroon, Chad, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, the Niger, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, with further missions planned to Burundi, Kenya and Rwanda.

VII. Coordination and partnerships

70. UNHCR continued to lead and coordinate the international response to refugee emergencies across the continent, in line with the refugee coordination model. This model supports host States by ensuring that there is an agreed inter-agency strategy for protection and solutions, collective objectives and joined-up appeals that govern the response of the United Nations and other partners. In addition to the inter-agency appeals at the country level, four regional refugee response plans that cover the refugee populations from Burundi, the Central African Republic, Nigeria and South Sudan were launched under the leadership of refugee response coordinators, and raised more than $700 million to support refugees in the neighbouring countries. The joint note of UNHCR and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on coordination in mixed situations was reconfirmed by the High Commissioner and the Emergency Relief Coordinator, and they issued joint guidance to field operations.

71. Responses to the situation of internally displaced persons in Africa continued to be coordinated through the inter-agency cluster system, in the context of both conflict and disaster-related displacement. In October 2016, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee issued a new policy on protection in humanitarian action, in which it affirmed the responsibility of humanitarian actors to place protection at the centre of humanitarian action at all stages of their response; defined the centrality of protection in humanitarian action and the process for its implementation at the country level; sought to reinforce the complementary roles, mandate and expertise of all relevant actors; built on other initiatives to strengthen protection; and referenced the normative framework as the foundation, including regional instruments, such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa and the Kampala Convention.

[5] World Bank, *Forcibly Displaced: Toward a Development Approach Supporting Refugees, the Internally Displaced, and Their Hosts* (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2017), available from https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/25016.

72. The Emergency Directors Group of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee continued to support the collective leadership of humanitarian country teams by advising them on operational issues of strategic concern and helping them to mobilize agency resources to address operational challenges and gaps. Missions were undertaken to the Central African Republic and Nigeria to see first-hand the operational challenges being faced by partners on the ground and determine immediate priorities for support. United Nations organizations continued to second staff with leadership and coordination skills to the Senior Transformative Agenda Implementation Team, which undertook missions to Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan to support country teams.

73. To address the challenges presented by the displacement situation in Africa, the United Nations continued to count on close partnerships with national and international NGOs. The work of NGOs was crucial to the welfare and protection of the displaced and helped to ensure that key needs were met in all areas. The work of national NGOs, in particular, filled gaps in local knowledge, provided context-specific expertise and helped to establish contact with affected populations, such as in Somalia; this has been invaluable to the United Nations in carrying out its work. NGOs also play a key advocacy role and are contributing to the roll-out of the comprehensive refugee response framework in Africa.

74. The private sector also played an increasingly important role in strengthening assistance and achieving solutions for the displaced. The IKEA Foundation, in partnership with various United Nations agencies and NGOs, continued to help in finding innovative solutions to refugee problems. The Foundation provided technical expertise and financial support, including in the areas of energy, livelihoods and education, for projects in numerous countries in Africa. In Kenya, the Vodafone Foundation helped to strengthen education through the Instant Network Schools initiative, which connects schools in the Dadaab refugee camp with online educational resources. In Malawi, Microsoft is supporting a project to bring Internet connectivity to refugee camps.

VIII. Funding

75. Between 1 July 2016 and 15 May 2017, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator allocated $283 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund to support life-saving activities in 23 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Of that amount, some $187 million enabled aid agencies to provide humanitarian assistance in response to displacement crises in 15 countries. This included allocations from the Fund's rapid-response window ($95 million) and its window for underfunded emergencies ($92 million), which together represented 45 per cent of the $418 million allocated worldwide during the period. A total of 185 Central Emergency Relief Fund projects in sub-Saharan Africa provided assistance and protection to refugees, internally displaced persons and other affected populations, including host communities.

76. The Central Emergency Response Fund also helped to address several regional displacement crises, including with the provision of $58 million towards assisting displaced and host communities in the Lake Chad Basin. Some $82 million was provided for life-saving assistance to displaced persons in South Sudan, and another $25 million was allocated to help those affected by the crisis in the Central African Republic.

77. Aid agencies in Nigeria received $25 million to rapidly scale up and sustain assistance for people who fled insurgency-related violence in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States. The Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda each received

$25 million, followed by the Central African Republic, with $18 million, South Sudan, with $16 million, the Niger, with $15 million and Cameroon, Chad and the Sudan with $14 million each. Sectors that received the largest financial support were food ($52 million), health ($52 million) and multisectoral refugee assistance ($22 million).

IX. Conclusions and recommendations

78. Over the past year, the total number of refugees and internally displaced persons in Africa continued to rise as a result of multiple crises across the continent. Gross human rights violations, coupled with sexual and gender-based violence, which is endemic in some countries and which acutely affects women and children, are unacceptable. The effects of conflict-induced displacement were exacerbated by heightened food insecurity and drought, which brought some areas to the brink of famine. Equally, food insecurity and drought led to the displacement of food producers, which reduced food production. Conflict also blocked access to land, livelihoods and markets, thereby heightening the risk of famine. While protection and assistance need to be expanded, the United Nations and its partners grappled with insufficient resources to meet the growing needs and bring about sustainable solutions.

79. **While a number of new developments, including the New York Declaration, raise the hope that the protection and humanitarian aspects of displacement will be addressed in a more comprehensive and predictable manner, there is an urgent need to address the root causes of conflict through a sustained effort by all stakeholders to put an end to the current crises. Against that backdrop:**

(a) **All States are urged to resolutely address the root causes of displacement and to amplify efforts to foster peace, stability and prosperity in Africa, with a view to preventing conflict and alleviating human suffering;**

(b) **Given the prominent role of armed conflict as a driver of displacement, all parties to conflict are called upon to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law and human rights law so as to prevent the conditions that lead to displacement;**

(c) **Given that the principle of non-refoulement, enshrined in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, is considered a rule of customary international law, all States are reminded of their obligation to respect the right to asylum and to keep their borders open to those fleeing conflict and persecution;**

(d) **All States and non-State actors are called upon to facilitate rapid and unimpeded access to refugees, internally displaced persons and other victims of conflict; to respect and protect humanitarian personnel, supplies and facilities, in compliance with international humanitarian law; and to ensure the civilian character of asylum;**

(e) **All parties are urged, in line with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, to better monitor, prevent and respond to serious human rights violations — including sexual and gender-based violence, forced recruitment and arbitrary arrest and detention — in particular those committed against displaced women and children;**

(f) **Given the importance of the principle of international solidarity and burden- and responsibility-sharing, Member States, in cooperation with the**

relevant stakeholders, are encouraged to implement the commitments made in the New York Declaration and the leaders' summit on refugees, and stakeholders are called upon to provide full support for the application of the comprehensive refugee response framework in Africa, including by engaging in new partnerships, particularly with development actors, in strengthening self-reliance and inclusion;

(g) States, humanitarian agencies and development actors are urged to work together and to redouble their efforts to support internally displaced persons in moving early towards self-sufficiency in protracted situations and to find durable solutions for refugees, including by putting in place the conditions necessary for voluntary repatriation;

(h) States and partners are called upon to ensure that access to education and livelihoods is a priority in any humanitarian response so as to prevent generations of refugees and internally displaced persons from living in poverty and to enable them to contribute to the development of their countries in the future;

(i) Member States and other donors are urged to ensure the availability of adequate, flexible and predictable humanitarian funding in support of humanitarian action in Africa to help in addressing the needs of and finding durable solutions for a growing number of refugees and internally displaced persons, and to ensure multi-year, flexible funding that transcends the humanitarian-development divide so as to reverse the trend of protracted internal displacement by targeting its causes.